

## **SPECULATIVE FICTION**

**Trimester 1**

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### Course Description:

What if there were a portal to another dimension deep in the closet of Hendrix guarded by the ghost of Jimi Hendrix himself? What if the clutter in Cary's office formed the habitat for a species of tiny mischievous grammar gnomes embroiled in a civil war over the worship of the Oxford comma? What if you were on a secret mission from the future to save School One from a plague of zombies propagated from a brain-eating fungus in the neglected student fridge? What would happen next?

Speculative fiction is a wide umbrella genre of literature that encompasses fantasy, science fiction, magical realism, horror, the paranormal, dystopian literature, Afrofuturism, alternative histories, superheroes and more. It does not seek to draw fixed lines categorizing these works but embraces the cross-genre nature of being unbound by realism and unleashes possibility.

In this class, we will collectively explore a diverse range of readings by classic and contemporary authors, and students will also be able to pursue their curiosities further through individually chosen readings. This class will be a hybrid of academic writing and creative writing. We'll discuss and analyze works for content, context, and craft and write academic essays. We'll also engage in regular creative writing prompts inspired by the texts and compose and refine original works.

Given the Halloween season, the first trimester will include, but not be limited to, readings of horror and the paranormal, and will also focus on regional place-based narratives. Students will create stories for submission to the annual Write RI contest. While grammar sheets, appropriate revisions, and adherence to guidelines and deadlines are expected, the spirit of the class will pursue the unexpected.

Assignments and due dates will be posted on the Homework Hub page at:  
<https://sites.google.com/view/slclasses/english/speculative-fiction>

### Texts & films:

- "The Writer's Werewolf" by Sharma Shields
- "The Call of Cthulhu" by H.P. Lovecraft
- "The Lottery" and an excerpt from *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *The Shining* film produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick
- "Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allen Poe
- "The Jaunt" by Stephen King
- Selected episodes from *The Twilight Zone* with Rod Serling

### Assessment:

- Good attendance, punctuality, adherence to deadlines, active class participation and respect.
- Careful work with clear sentences, attention to grammar and punctuation, organization of ideas, and citation of sources.
- Active participation in writing prompts and keeping of a writer's notebook.
- Readings & responses: Readings must be completed on schedule and full readiness to participate in class discussions on the reading due date is expected. Responses are guided reflections on the reading and are due by the start of class. You are welcome and encouraged to reuse/recycle ideas from your response papers in your formal essays.

- Regular completion of grammar sheets.
- Formal academic essays and creative writing pieces according to guidelines. Revisions may be required.